

12 March 1953

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director (Plans)

SUBJECT : Language and Area Training

1. We have just had an opportunity to read over a draft of your Area and Language Training Regulation. It is indeed a step in the right direction, but we feel it does not go far enough. [REDACTED] my division chief in languages has stated that after one year of active operation of the Language Services Division in the Office of Training, the staffs and divisions of DD/P have not availed themselves of the language facilities now in existence. The reasons usually given for not filling quotas in courses of study are lack of manpower and pressure of work. 25X1A9a

2. You are aware, I am sure, that the Defense establishments, e.g., Air Attache Branch, Military Attache Branch, are making language competence mandatory for personnel prior to field assignment. By comparison, we in CIA are still functioning under a program of intermittent improvisation. To date, efforts to bring the operating offices to a recognition of their need by persuasion have not met with much success. A possible exception is the NEA Division which has some dozen people in a two-year area and language program. One year of this work will be done in the United States and one year abroad. This is commended planning and should be copied by other divisions.

3. I am convinced that unless there is a clear authoritative directive making language skill mandatory, together with such degree of area competence as is appropriate to the mission, the present pattern of makeshift improvisation will continue to prevail.

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4. It would seem essential that steps be taken immediately to detach some of the younger better people with excellent language aptitude who would be able to work full time on area and language training. The time spent would depend on how difficult the language is to acquire. This kind of concentration, we believe, is essential if this indispensable logistical language support is to be effectively acquired.

MATTHEW BAIRD  
Director of Training